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# The Chronicle

of the Early American Industries Association, Inc.

Volume VI

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Number 4

## COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG

By SELMA K. ENGEL

A first-hand view of how Americans lived, worked and made history in colonial times will be the keynote of the Fall 1953 meeting of the Early American Industries Association, to be held during the October 30 through November 1 week-end in the restored 18th century city of Williamsburg.

The Williamsburg meeting will be an excursion two hundred years into the past. It will be a journey into American history, a pilgrimage to the very roots of America's democratic traditions. It will provide a glimpse at the furnishings, gardens, architecture of the 18th century, the trades, housekeeping and traditions of another era.

The city of Williamsburg, near the tip of Virginia's lower Peninsula, has been restored to the way it looked when it was one of the most important centers of colonial America. The public buildings and homes look again as they did when George Washington, Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson were familiar figures about town. In the buildings open to the public, the furniture, silver, ceramics and fabrics are all the type with which colonial families lived. In 18th century shops, wigmaking, bootmaking, cabinet work and other crafts are still carried on as they were by the tradesmen of 200 years ago.

Williamsburg dates back to 1633 when it was originally named Middle Plantation, a stockade settlement erected against Indian attack by hard-pressed colonists from nearby Jamestown. As late as 1690, the whole outpost consisted of only a few houses, a mill, smithy, store, small brick church and graveyard. Although the College of William and Mary was

founded there in 1693 — oldest college, after Harvard, in the English-American colonies — Middle Plantation was hardly more than a village.

In 1699, however, the capital of the Virginia Colony was moved to Middle Plantation. The town's name was changed to Williamsburg, in honor of the reigning English king, William III, and a planning and building program commenced.

For the next 80 years Williamsburg was one of the leading cities of Colonial America with an influential role in the formulation and achievement of American ideals of independence, human rights and religious liberty. The busy capital witnessed the zenith of British authority in the American colonies and served as a training ground of Virginia statesmen prominent in the creation of the United States of America. In the House of Burgesses in Williamsburg, men like Washington, Jefferson, George Mason and others acquired their political experience and formulated their constitutional theories.

During this period Williamsburg was also a center of commerce and trade for the Virginia colony which reached, at

that time, to the Ohio River and beyond. Real estate, slaves, tobacco and other goods were bought and sold at public auctions and private transactions. Milliners, bakers, blacksmiths, apothecaries and others set up their shops in the little Tidewater city and earned their living supplying services and goods to their fellow townsfolk as well as to the people who came in once or twice a year from outlying regions.

Williamsburg was also the social and fashion center of



*The Governor's Palace, Williamsburg, Virginia*

## The Chronicle

Virginia. Here, in his elegant Palace, lived the royal governor who exerted a strong influence on the styles and culture of the colonists. Here was Virginia's first, and for many years, only, theatre, and only newspaper. Here, during "Publick Times," gathered the leaders and aristocrats from all over the colony. Taverns were jammed and shops were stocked not only with their owners' handiwork but with the latest imports from London.

Although wealthy Virginians usually lived away from Williamsburg on their vast plantations, there were some who built themselves houses in town. Most of the Williamsburg homes and furnishings of the period, modest or wealthy, represented the fashions and needs of the time. The clothing worn by the townspeople followed the styles set by the standards of England. Shopkeepers and tradesmen operated as closely as they could in the English tradition.

In 1780 the capital of Virginia was moved to Richmond and the days of colonial glory for Williamsburg were over. Fires and the harsh effects of time obliterated many of the historic landmarks. The main stream of social, political and commercial life moved elsewhere.

The restoration of Williamsburg to its 18th-century appearance was started in 1926. The project was conceived by the late Reverend W. A. R. Goodwin, rector of Williamsburg's Bruton Parish Church, has been made possible by funds from John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and is being carried on by the organization known as Colonial Williamsburg.

Every conceivable source of information was utilized to bring back the city where history had been made in the 18th century. Old maps, charts, drawings, paintings, deeds, newspapers and all sorts of public and private papers gave significant information. One of the most important documents of all in restoring Williamsburg was the engraved copper plate found some 3,000 miles away in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, England. Archaeological excavations exposed old foundations and uncovered a treasure trove of fragments from which were reproduced bricks, hardware, silver, ceramics and many other of the articles used in the 18th century.

Eighteenth century buildings still standing were stripped of Victorian gingerbread and other changes which had been tacked on through the years and restored to the way they looked when the Stamp Act was the big news of the day. Long vanished colonial landmarks were rebuilt right on their original foundations. Gardens were replanted according to the designs they had followed in the 18th century and with the kinds of plants grown at the time. The brick walks, the fence pickets and other details of colonial days were all restored.

During their meeting in Williamsburg, participants in the Early American Industries Association meeting will see more than 400 buildings that look just as they did in the 18th century. The program for the next meeting includes a tour of eight of these structures which are now major exhibition buildings, decorated and furnished as they were 200 years ago and open to public inspection.

These exhibition buildings include the Capitol where Patrick Henry fired colonial Americans with his outcry against the Stamp Act. Much of American Revolutionary history was made in the Williamsburg Capitol. Here, on May 15,

1776, the House of Burgesses called on Virginia's sister colonies to declare independence from Britain. Here, on June 12, 1776, was passed the Virginia Bill of Rights, basis of the first ten amendments of the United States Constitution.

Behind the Capitol the group will see the colonial Gaol, with its pillory, stocks and whipping post, where "Black-beard's" men were once imprisoned.

Down the main street, about a block from the Capitol, the group will also visit the Raleigh Tavern where colonial legislators ate, drank and roomed while the House of Burgesses was in session. Here too, political leaders met to discuss and to argue the issues of the day and here the House of Burgesses twice met when an angry royal governor dissolved the colonial assembly.

Further down the main street the tour will include the Magazine, standing since 1715. Now the storehouse for one of the most complete collections of 18th century military firearms in America. The removal of powder from this building by the royal Governor touched off the first armed resistance against royal authority in Virginia.

Along the Palace Green, the group will be escorted through two restored colonial homes, the Brush-Everard House and the Wythe House. The Brush-Everard House, standing here since 1717, is the town house of a wealthy Virginian. The Wythe House has played important roles in American history as the home of one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, as the place where Thomas Jefferson discussed law and as Washington's headquarters during the siege of Yorktown.

At the end of the Palace Green, the group will see the Governor's Palace itself. A magnificent home by the standards of any age, the Palace is the most popular of all Colonial Williamsburg's exhibition buildings. Here lived the Royal Governors of Virginia. Here Patrick Henry took up his residence in 1776 as the first governor of the new Commonwealth of Virginia. Around the Palace are outbuildings such as its kitchen, the smokehouse and the scullery where candles are still made. Surrounding the Palace are the fabulous gardens that have brought people to Williamsburg from all parts of the globe.

The group will also see the Ludwell-Paradise House, a colonial home now used as an American folk art museum.

The tour of Williamsburg will also be concerned with how 18th century Americans made a living. Under Colonial Williamsburg's "Craft Shop" program, 18th century trades have been revived and are being practiced by craftsmen in colonial costume using the equipment and methods of 200 years ago.

Newest of these Craft Shops is a bakery which will be formally opened on October 30 in conjunction with the Williamsburg meeting of the Early American Industries Association. In a rambling, white frame building behind the Raleigh Tavern, a master baker, using colonial utensils, recipes and an 18th-century-style oven, will bake bread and pastries. Bakeries were operated in Williamsburg during the 18th century and the building behind the Raleigh will reproduce the type of establishment where colonial housewives secured the baked goods they served their families. The building itself is a reconstruction of the original kitchen of the Raleigh Tavern.

(Continued on Page 40)

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*The Baker at Work in His Shop*



*The Peruke-Maker Dresses a Wig*



*Interior, Wythe Spinning House*



*The Bookbinder Hand Tools a Book Cover*

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(Continued from Page 38)

A few doors away from the bakery the group will also see the Pasteur-Galt Shop, clearly identified by the mortar and pestle on its sign as an apothecary's establishment. An array of herbs, "elixirs," "ointments," and other 18th century medicinal concoctions line the shelves together with tobacco, spices, perfumes and the other items which the druggist dispensed 200 years ago. In the back room of the shop is the area which the apothecary used as his office and treatment room and which is again equipped with an assortment of 18th century surgical tools.

On the other side of the street, the group will visit the King's Arm Barber Shop where the peruke-maker has material and tools to fashion and dress wigs of every description. A basin, razor and soap dish rest beside a chromeless colonial barber chair and close by is the cone-shaped mask which a gentleman held over his face while the barber powdered his wig. For the minor dental operations which the 18th century barber also performed, the shop is equipped with iron tooth extractors.

The tour of Williamsburg will take in the Colonial Printing Office operated as a typical printing establishment of the 18th century. The Caslon type is set by hand, made up in the sort of forms used in Benjamin Franklin's time and run off on the kind of English common press that turned out the first news of the Stamp Act. As in colonial days, a book-binder works in one corner of the shop, for the 18th century printing office turned out books and ledgers as well as newspapers and official documents.

Another 18th century craft in operation is the Boot-maker's Shop where a shoemaker works at the sort of bench his predecessors used 200 years ago. Hanging on the wall is a collection of wooden lasts and the shop is equipped with the necessary equipment for making stitches "hard drawn with hand-leathers" and with "good thread well twisted" as the statutes prescribed.

On a back street of the restored area, the group will visit the Deane Shop and Forge where a blacksmith fashions and repairs all kinds of ironmongery. With every farm and every home needing some of the hardware items which the shop produced, the smith was sometimes a man of substantial wealth. Today's blacksmith still heats his metal in a forge kept glowing with a hand-operated bellows and uses hammer and tongs to shape and weld his work on an ancient anvil.

On the grounds of the Governor's Palace, the tour will include an 18th century candlemaking operation while in a small building outside the Wythe House, the group will see spinning and weaving carried on as they were in colonial days. At the other end of town, the group will stop at the cabinetmaker's shop where 18th century tools and methods are still used to fashion and repair furniture.

The program for the meeting also features a preview of still another 18th century Craft Shop, the Silversmith, which will not be ready for public opening for some months to come.

During the meeting, members of the Early American Industries Association will also have the opportunity to visit Colonial Williamsburg's archaeological laboratory. Here is where specialists sort, clean, and classify the thousands of fragments of metal, glass, ceramics, and other items found during excavations in the 18th century part of the city. Fragments

from the 18th century are carefully studied for materials, design and workmanship and the work of this laboratory has made possible the accurate reconstruction of many colonial items.

Another high spot of the meeting will be a view of the Wolcott Tool Collection, a group of some 5,000 different tools which Colonial Williamsburg received as a gift some years ago from the late Stephen B. Wolcott, the first editor of *The Chronicle*. The collection, representing almost every type of craft practiced in colonial America, includes tools made in America as well as some imported from England and France.

In addition to 18th century buildings, gardens and shops, members of the Early American Industries Association will see some of the atmosphere of colonial days recaptured in restored Williamsburg. Horse-drawn carriages roll leisurely down the main street. Eighteenth century costumes are worn by the craftsmen, the hostesses in the exhibition buildings, by the guards at the Gaol, by the militiamen at the Magazine, by waiters in the restored colonial taverns and by maids and janitors. In appropriate buildings are flower arrangements, fresh in season and dried in winter, made just as a colonial wife would have made them. The flag of Queen Anne's day is saluted each morning by fire from an 18th century cannon.

Still another facet of restored 18th century Williamsburg will be revealed during the meeting of the Early American Industries Association — the painstaking scholarship that has gone into the work of recreating the colonial city. In the course of rebuilding the city as a living monument to American history, tradition and ideals, information on almost every phase of 18th century American life is being collected and organized into a body of material that will serve students and scholars for generations to come.

### WHAT IS IT?



Mrs. Margaret H. Merhoff, County Historian, Sodus, N. Y. would like some assistance in identifying the article pictured above. The pan-like portion is 25 inches long, 12 inches wide and 2 inches high. The spouts are 11 inches high. The whole contraption is made of tin. No other information regarding it seems to be available. This would appear to be a real sticker and a considerable challenge to members of this society. Any guesses?



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*The Blacksmith at His Anvil*



*Bayberry Candles Being Poured*



*Printer and Apprentice*



*The Cabinetmaker and His Helpers*



*The Apothecary Compounds an "Elixir"*



*The Bootmaker Instructs His Apprentice*

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### RECORDS FOR THE COLLECTION

BY EDWARD HUNTER ROSS

Consider Catchall Museum which has received a bequest of several hundred agricultural implements constituting the Silas Q. Parsnip Collection.\* While the museum appreciates the bequest, it has never had enough money or enough tools to justify a full-time curator of tools. Nor did Mr. Parsnip give the museum any money to permit even the temporary services of an expert. So, the collection is turned over to poor Curator Weary who has specialized in early glass, ceramics, and textiles.

In a box of nine hatchets, he finds a detached paper sticker stating, "Hatchet with which George Washington chopped down the cherry tree." A friend reports, "Silas used to tell some wonderful stories about collecting those things, and he could demonstrate how each one was used. It's a really fascinating collection." But Silas never wrote it down. In time, Weary may be able to identify all the tools, but neither he nor anyone else can re-capture the lost information as to their age or the locality where they were used or many other bits of information which would increase the collection's value.

This is only a slightly exaggerated account of what is happening constantly not only to museums but also to families who would like to realize the maximum value from Grandpa's collection. Each collector might ask himself, "What is my collection worth without me on hand to explain it?" After that, he may start keeping simple records.

Such complex cross-reference files as are required by museums are not necessary for the ordinary collector. All that is needed is a record of available information with a sure way to connect it with the correct object. Even if Mr. Parsnip had incontrovertible proof that he had acquired the most glamorized hatchet in American folk-lore, the proof loses significance when applied to "one of these nine." In addition to insecurity, stickers and tags have other disadvantages, the most notable being the size, which limits the amount that can be written.

Altogether, the most satisfactory system is a combination of a card file or book for the information and a number to connect the information with the object. The materials needed are: (1) a small jar of paint known variously as show-card, tempera, or poster paint; (2) a small jar of white shellac; (3) one or two brushes with good points for numbering; (4) a cheap broader brush for the shellac; (5) either a notebook or a set of 3" x 5" cards. The total cost should be less than three dollars even with the justified expense for high quality sable brushes for numbering.

\* To start the record system, write the number "1" in your notebook or on a card and, selecting an object from your collection, write whatever information you wish to record about it. Paint the number "1" on the object and, after allowing ten minutes for the paint to dry, put shellac over the number. This is all there is to it except cleaning the paint brush in water and the shellac brush in alcohol. The remaining objects are, of course, given succeeding numbers.

The fundamentals leave room for a great deal of individual choice. The number on the object, for example, should be inconspicuous but easy to find. Standardizing the location helps. Placing all the numbers on the bases of a set of pewter measures is obviously better than marking one on the base,

another on the handle and another on the rim. The best location is normally one that will be out of sight when the object is shown, certainly not on the best and most conspicuous face. Numbers should be kept as small as possible consistent with the size of the piece. A height of three-eighths of an inch might be needed on a flax-brake whereas one-eighth might be too much on a thimble.

If the fifteenth object consists of two or more parts which might become separated, such as a box and cover, the box should be 15A and the cover 15B.

Tempera rather than oil paint is suggested because it is easy to apply on most materials, quick to dry, and easy to remove. It will rub off, however, unless coated with shellac. For iron which has had an oil treatment oil paint may be necessary. As for color, tradition seems to require museums to use red but you may prefer something else. Ink is not recommended because it does not hold well on some metals and, on the other hand, it penetrates wood and paper to leave a permanent mark which is hard to remove. For textiles, the number can be inked or typed on a cloth tape which is then stitched to the fabric. A fairly hard lead pencil is best for paper.

The chief disadvantages of a notebook for recording information are that it will not go in a typewriter and later information cannot be added to early entries as easily as on individual cards. Cards, however, can get out of order, especially if you happen to drop the drawer or box in which they are filed. Some people believe that the shortcomings of both bound notebook and card file can be overcome with a small looseleaf notebook in which each item is recorded on a separate sheet.

The record of an article which has been lost, destroyed, discarded or sold should not be blotted out or removed. For various reasons, it is better to line out the entry and note the date and method of disposal leaving the record in place.

Probably no two collectors would agree on the amount and type of information to be recorded. A minimum, however, would be the date acquired, the person from whom acquired and a full name for the object ("tongs for silver-smith's draw-bench" rather than "tongs"). Most people would also note the cost. Beyond that, the record will vary with the object and the collector. Notes on the condition of the piece and its dimensions can be helpful. Occasionally a collector may feel that the expense of individual photographs is justified. If he wishes to add either the comments of experts who have examined the pieces or page references to books with descriptions and photographs of similar items, the file will have even more value.

Most important though is a record of any known history. A few words at the time can save many a puzzled brow and many hours of research later. Explanation of a strange looking plane in a Florida collection, for example, might be simplified if the collector had noted, "Made in Minnesota by an immigrant from Norway." If he could have recorded the maker's name and date, it would be even better.

The more fully and accurately information is recorded the more highly the piece will be valued by any future owner. Finally, it may be well to remember that many a collector has looked at an object acquired twenty or more years earlier and wondered, "Now where in the world did I get that?"

## WILLIAMSBURG MEETING

Detailed information in regard to the Williamsburg Meeting of the Early American Industries Association on October 30 - November 1, 1953 was mailed to every member of the Association during the first week in September. If members have failed to receive this information please notify the editors of *The Chronicle* by post card and this information will be forwarded immediately.

It is imperative that reservations for this meeting be made in advance if members desire to stay at any of Colonial Williamsburg's hostelrys. It is also well to note that the program as arranged is extremely full and in order to enjoy the maximum benefit of your stay you should be ready to start by 9:00 a. m. Friday, October 30th. All of Colonial Williamsburg's Lodging facilities are located within easy walking distance of the Restored Area and Meeting Headquarters at the Williamsburg Lodge. Members will be lodged at the Williamsburg Lodge, Brick House Tavern, and the Williamsburg Inn in accordance with their requirements.

The Registration Fee will be \$12.50 and will cover admission to eight Exhibition Buildings, the special exhibits, the nine craft shops, a cocktail party, and three meals. Reductions will be made for late arrivals.

One of the highlights of the Fall Meeting will be a visit to the Mariners Museum on the afternoon of November 1st. This museum is located near Newport News, Virginia and contains an outstanding collection of tools, utensils, and appurtenances of our maritime history.

In honor of the visit of the Early American Industries Association, Colonial Williamsburg is formally opening for the first time its two newest exhibits. These are the newly refurnished bed rooms of the Raleigh Tavern and, of more immediate interest to the Association the newly reconstructed Kitchen and Bakery of the Raleigh. These two exhibits will help complete the picture of a commodious and elegant hostelry of the 18th Century.

In addition to the scheduled activities (outlined in the September letter) members of the Association who arrive in Williamsburg prior to October 30th are cordially invited to attend a civic opening and tea at the Tidewater Kitchen of the 1792 Town House of Moses Myers in the city of Norfolk, some 40 miles from Williamsburg. This building owned by the City of Norfolk, and operated by the Norfolk Museum, Mr. J. D. Hatch, Director, will be formally opened on October 29th, 1953 between 4:00 and 5:30 p. m.

Members are referred to the July issue of the *Chronicle* for travel information. Any additional information or assistance may be had by addressing the editors of the *Chronicle*.

There has been a small change in the schedule for the meeting.

The formal opening of Colonial Williamsburg's newest Craft Shop, the Bakery, and the second floor of the Raleigh Tavern originally scheduled for 1:00 p. m. on Sunday, November 1, 1953 has been changed to 11:30 a. m. on Friday, October 30, 1953.

## TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY

This year is the twentieth anniversary of the Early American Industries Association. A perusal of Volume 1, Number 1 of *The Chronicle* reveals that the first meeting of the group of avid tool collectors which was to become the E. A. I. A. was held at Wiggins' Old Tavern, Northampton, Massachusetts at noon on August 31, 1933. Those present were: F. W. Fuessenich, J. A. Humberstone, S. E. Gage, A. E. Lownes, Dr. Arthur E. Bye, W. B. Sprague, S. C. Wolcott, A. B. Wells, L. N. Wiggins, E. T. Goodnow, F. L. Thoms, J. C. Hood, Dr. E. A. Rushford, Emma Fitts Bradford, Florence P. Berger, and U. Waldo Cutler. Mr. Sprague was elected President, Mr. Wolcott, Secretary and Mr. Goodnow, Treasurer.

The first issue of *The Chronicle* was published on November 20th of that same year with Mr. Wolcott as Editor. (Mr. Wolcott's collection of tools is now at Colonial Williamsburg where many of them are used daily in the various Craft Shops.) The first issues of *The Chronicle* were made possible by the generosity of Mr. A. B. Wells.

During the first meeting at Northampton, Massachusetts in 1933 Mr. Sprague outlined the purposes of the new association as follows:

To form an association of members interested in collecting and preserving obsolete tools and implements that were used by the early settlers, pioneers, farmers trades and crafts, etc., including all branches of household tools and utensils.

To arouse an increased interest in the above work by writing or suggesting articles for magazines and papers.

To bring those interested in the above in closer touch for an easier exchange of information.

To be mutually helpful by assisting each other in finding or securing such tools as they might be seeking, and otherwise passing on to all the members through the Secretary or our bulletin any news of interest.

To bring about a better understanding of the old time industrial implements.

To arouse a greater public interest by encouraging new collectors along these lines.

To encourage museums to take greater interest in this branch of collecting.

To secure the assistance of museums and their officers in classifying, naming and displaying these tools, and in bringing them to the attention of the public.

To form a library, or at least a list of books, and their location, dealing with these subjects.

To encourage dealers to search out such material.

To exchange information, especially on the use of tools unknown to the present owner as the use of many of the old tools has been nearly or wholly lost to us.

To encourage the final disposition of collections in permanent depositories.

# The Chronicle

## The Chronicle

Early American  
Industries Association, Inc.

The purpose of the association is to encourage the study and better understanding of early American industry, in the home, in the shop, on the farm, and on the sea, and especially to discover, identify, classify, preserve and exhibit obsolete tools, implements, utensils, instruments, vehicles, appliances and mechanical devices used by American craftsmen, farmers, housewives, mariners, professional men, and other workers.

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Communications regarding the contents of *The Chronicle* should be addressed to the Editor; regarding back numbers to Loring McMillen; suggestions for members to any of the Officers; all other matters to the President. Addresses as here given.

### DUES

The annual dues are payable January 1st, and are as follows. Active members \$5.00; Helpful members, \$7.50; Encouraging members, \$10.00; Enthusiatic members, \$15.00, and Delighted members, \$25.00. There is no distinction between classes, except the amount of dues, but *The Chronicle* cannot be financed unless a considerable number of the members pay more than \$5.00. Each member is expected to voluntarily place himself in the class which represents the amount he is willing to contribute to the support of the Association for the current year. Life membership costs \$50.00. *The Chronicle* is sent to all members without additional charge.

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## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE EARLY  
AMERICAN INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION

You will recall that my mission for 1953 was to get more of our members to attend our meetings. This was accomplished at our spring meeting at Shelburne, Vermont, but due very little to my efforts. We had the largest attendance we have ever had — 157 members registered.

John Kenneth Byard, Chairman of our Membership Committee, who acted as Chairman of the Shelburne Meeting must be given the most credit for this large attendance. I think, however, that word of the good fellowship that has been developed among our members who attend the meetings and the good times we have together has been passed along and this, I am sure, has helped greatly to swell the attendance.

Mr. Byard and Mr. Sterling D. Emerson, Director of the Shelburne Museum and Co-Chairman of the meeting, worked out a wonderful and extremely interesting program. I want particularly to give credit to certain people who helped so much to make the meeting a success from a financial point of view.

A year ago our good friend, Stanley Howe of Ottsville, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, suggested that we might raise funds for the Association by asking our members to ship or bring to the spring meeting certain surplus items they might have which they would be willing to donate to the Association and which could be put up for sale at auction. This was scheduled as one of the events of the Shelburne Meeting and through the generosity of a number of our members a fine assortment of items was collected. Our capable and hard working Vice President, George M. Simmons, acted as auctioneer and although it was necessary, due to the quantity of material, to start the auction in the Town Hall and finish it in two locations on board the Ticonderoga, the total amount raised by his efforts was over \$1000. An additional \$85.00 was raised by the energetic Mr. Orris P. Kilbourne who held a pool on the amount that the items to be auctioned would bring and our thanks go to him also.

The handling of the money and the keeping of the records was more difficult than would ordinarily be the case because we not only wanted to keep track of the amount received for each article, but the name of the donor and the name of the purchaser and to get a receipt from the purchaser in order not handle any money until the close of the auction. Loring McMillen took charge of this and was ably assisted by Mrs. Stanley Howe, Mrs. Miner Cooper and Miss Marjorie Kerr.

So, officially, as President of the Association, let me thank all the donors of the articles, all the buyers of the articles and all those who assisted in the auction for their help in making it such a tremendous success.

I cannot close this brief message without a word of thanks to our host and hostess, Mr. and Mrs. J. Watson Webb, and the members of their staff, for all they did to make our visit so educational, so pleasant and so heart warming.

Long live FAIA.

EDWARD DURRELL, President



# Early American Industries

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## DEVELOPMENT OF AN EARLY INDUSTRY

### THE SCOVILL MANUFACTURING COMPANY

During recent excavations at Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, two brass army uniform buttons, probably worn during the War Between the States were uncovered. One of these buttons carried the seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia. The other was an ornamental dress button with an anchor stamped on it.

These buttons were sent to the Scovill Manufacturing Company, Waterbury, Connecticut, for identification, as the Scovill name appeared on the button backs. Edward H. Davis, curator of the Scovill button collection, identified the Commonwealth of Virginia button as being made between 1840 and 1850 by a predecessor firm known as Scovills and Company. It was merged into the Scovill Manufacturing Company on January 30, 1850. The other button was made by Scovill sometime after 1850.

These uniform buttons are two of many millions made by Scovill since its founding in 1802. This Waterbury firm has been supplying uniform buttons to the United States Government ever since the War of 1812, with the Government being the oldest continuous customer of the Company. The Scovill organization had its start in Waterbury 151 years ago when Abel Porter and his three partners established Abel Porter & Company for the manufacture of metal buttons. From this single product line the company has continually expanded to the point where today it produces thousands of different items made from copper, brass, aluminum, steel, and nickel alloys. But buttons are still a very important part of its output.

#### FIRST TO CAST BRASS IN AMERICA

In order to produce a better and more reasonable button than the pewter ones then standard in America, Abel Porter and his associates began to form them from scrap brass. To assure a supply of brass, they became the first in America to cast and shortly thereafter cold-roll it, initially for their own use, and subsequently for the general metal fabricating trade as well.

The initial efforts of the Porter firm in casting brass were crude and primitive when compared to today's standards. They used a pit fire with huge bellows to force a draft through the fire bed in order to melt the metal. This was poured by hand-carried ladles into small band and wedge molds, each with a capacity of about 1 pound.

While using these methods, early Scovill craftsmen could have possibly produced five to ten pounds of brass bars hourly. During the company's 150th anniversary last year (1952), the Mill Products Division reconstructed an authentic replica of the first brass casting shop in America. Scovill employees, dressed in authentic costumes of early 1800 metal craftsmen, enacted the hand casting process at two exhibits.

The first showing was the community celebration sponsored by the local Waterbury Chamber of Commerce to highlight the 150th anniversary of the founding of the brass industry in the Naugatuck Valley. The second showing took place at the National Metal Exposition in Philadelphia.

In contrast to five pounds of brass cast hourly in 1802 Scovill today has two huge continuous casting machines. One of these machines casts flat bars weighing over three thousand pounds each at the rate of one every five to seven minutes!

Colonial Williamsburg interprets the complete history of early America up to 1800, while Scovill in its way vividly portrays the industrial history of the United States and its development over the past 151 years through the wide diversity of the many products it has made as times and fashions have changed. Scovill's many contributions to industry definitely helped to make American life more interesting and enjoyable.

One of the firm's contributions was to improve the pewter button in vogue over 150 years ago. The eye on the back of the button was made of cast pewter and because of the softness of the metal, thread used to hold the button to the garment often cut through the eye. Equally hazardous to the sartorial appearance was the pewter eye that had sharp burrs left on it, which in many cases cut thread or garment. Abel Porter's contribution was the development of a brass button with a strong, smooth wire eye soldered to the back.

#### HISTORY TOLD THROUGH BUTTONS

There are many interesting stories told about individual buttons produced by the firm of which 14 were selected during its sesqui-centennial in 1952 when the firm's Button and Fastener Division developed a commemorative series of advertisements around these individual buttons.

The ingenuity which the early partners incorporated into their business was shown during the War of 1812. The firm had received a substantial metal button order from the Government to equip uniforms, but the Government was running out of cloth. One of the partners, James M. L. Scovill, heard that John Jacob Astor had a flock of sheep grazing on Manhattan Island which was ready for shearing. He journeyed to New York, bought the wool and shipped it to Waterbury where the firm set up a textile mill to produce the cloth in order that the uniforms could be made for which the buttons had been ordered!

One of Scovill's most famous buttons is a set of solid gold buttons presented to General Lafayette when he revisited this country in 1825. The Scovill partners made these buttons with a profile of George Washington embossed on them from a single nugget unearthed in North Carolina.

A few years later the Republic of Texas called on Scovill to supply their armed forces and their valiant navy with uniform buttons. Replicas of the Texas navy buttons were presented to Admiral Nimitz upon his return to his native state at the end of World War II.

In addition to supplying uniform buttons for the armed forces, other branches of the Government, such as the Post Office Department, uniformed personnel of our transportation systems are also outfitted with Scovill's metal buttons.

The first uniform button adopted by the Post Office Department was taken from a design created by Ben Franklin, America's first post-master general. It showed a post rider on horseback with the letters, "P. O. D." underneath.

#### FAMOUS CAMPAIGN BUTTONS

One of the most unusual applications of Scovill buttons was made by Andrew Jackson for his successful presidential campaign in 1828 when his supporters ordered metal buttons to identify themselves as advocates of "Old Rough and Ready."

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These buttons served a double purpose — one of identifying themselves with the hero of the War of 1812, and the other their traditional utilitarian function of holding vest and coat together.

The firm continued to supply presidential and other political office seekers with various types of campaign buttons until 1890 when celluloid generally replaced the metal face. The company, however, continues to supply the metal pin which is used to attach the button to one's garments.

William Henry Harrison in his 1848 presidential campaign showed how to please the tastes of voters toward hard cider. He had a series of buttons struck off which were used in various sections of the country. In those areas where hard cider was accepted, it showed a cider barrel at the front door of a log cabin — the cabin being symbolic of his birth place. In those areas where hard cider was not as popular, the barrel depicted was at the side of the cabin, and where it was frowned on a little bit, more to the rear. In dry areas no cider cask was to be seen at all!

His opponents countered with a button which portrayed Harrison as being an advocate of hard drink, distributing a button showing a flaming log cabin with the words, "Hard Cider" in the smoke. Overhead soars an eagle holding in its beak a scroll with the letters, "O. K."

Another Scovill button which pulled no punches was that used by the opponents of Martin Van Buren to show their contempt for him. They had a button featuring a figure of a man thumbing his nose and the words "You can't come in, Marty" around the edge.

Scovill's many contributions to the clothing industry have helped put the manufacture of clothing on a mass-production basis. Their engineers are continually improving buttons and inventing new machinery to expedite button attaching operations.

### MODERNIZING BUTTONS

Scovill experts began modernizing buttons as early as the late 1880's. It was about this time that apparel manufacturing was moving out of the home into mass-production. In 1894 they introduced an improved tack button — a button held firmly in place by a tack driven through the cloth of a garment and up into the button shank where a metal tack or anvil in the button head turns back the point of the tack. In the same year they produced a machine for applying tack buttons and made it available to apparel manufacturers on a rental basis.

A light weight snap fastener which would resist frequent laundering was introduced 17 years ago and is known as the "Gripper" Snap fastener. Its uses have been expanded to include all kinds of children's clothes, men's and boys' woven underwear, men's trousers and shirts, a variety of washable women's wear, and work clothes.

In 1949 the company added zippers to their closure line which are marketed under the trade name of "Gripper Zippers." The firm first concentrated on applying zippers to work clothing, as the use until then of zippers in work pants and dungarees was practically nil. Today, Scovill is probably the largest supplier of zippers to this field. Gripper zippers are also used in men's trousers and slacks, foundation garments, rubber footwear, and other applications.

Amateur photography received its first impetus through the efforts of Scovill which was the first to commercially produce daguerreotype plates in this country. Today, the trade name "Ansco" stands for Anthony and Scovill. To back up the sale of their daguerreotype plates, Scovill published some 70 books on how to take pictures and also made the first popular priced portable camera.

The wide range of different light metal products Scovill is capable of producing runs into many thousands. Its vaults are chuck full of designs, tools, and dies for consumer and industrial products which developed their popularity as the country was growing. These can be called upon to reproduce many interesting items of early Americana. Recently for instance, Scovill's long association with the aluminum industry was documented by uncovering its first invoice, dated June 25, 1889, for aluminum ingots from the Pittsburgh Reduction Company, now the Aluminum Company of America.

Scovill has been cold-rolling and fabricating aluminum since that date, being the first brass company to process this metal. The firm this year is expanding its aluminum cold-rolling operations to produce a very closely controlled aluminum strip.

Scovill has grown to its present place of importance in American commerce because it has always been alert to the needs and demands of the changing industrial economy and consumer patterns. With its rich tradition of craftsmanship in metals, ability to recognize the worth of a new product, and know-how to merchandise it, Scovill should continue to maintain its present leadership in the light metal fabricating field.

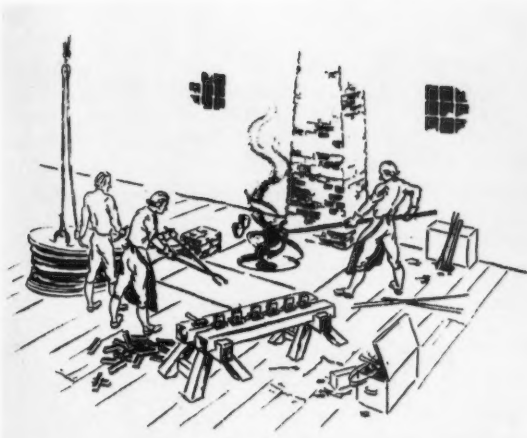


*Front and back view of two Scovill-made buttons found during recent excavations in colonial Williamsburg. The one on the left was made for the Virginia Militia, and probably worn during the War Between the States. The other was probably worn during the same period and is a uniform dress button bearing an anchor. This is how the buttons looked when first unearthed.*

*Scovill Photo*

## Early American Industries

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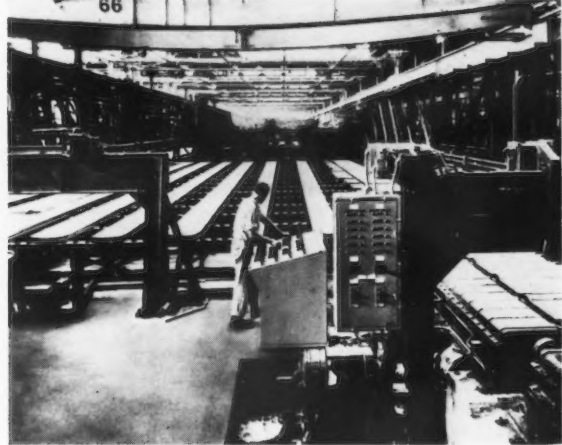
An artist's conception of the first method of casting brass in the United States by Scovill Manufacturing Company, Waterbury, Connecticut. These early craftsmen hand-poured brass into small band and wedge molds, each with a capacity of about one pound with an hourly production of five to ten pounds. This is contrasted to Scovill's operations today which can turn out up to 30,000 pounds of brass bars an hour in its continuous casting machine.

Scovill Photo



Political campaigning as we know it today first came into vogue in the presidential race of 1840 when William Henry Harrison and his running mate, John Tyler, started their campaign under the slogan of "Tippecanoe and Tyler Too." Posters, mass rallies, parades, and other crowd gathering devices were first used 113 years ago. Harrison supporters employed metal campaign buttons, made by Scovill, which served both to identify the individual's political choice and also the traditional utilitarian function of holding coat and vest together.

Scovill Photo



Scovill's new mill for cold-rolling of brass, one of the most modern of its type in the industry today, is over a quarter of a mile long and completely automatic. Various types of equipment move massive ton slabs of brass from point to point in this operation just as a baby pushes a ball around its crib. This rolling mill is part of a \$10,000,000 expansion program completed in 1949 which includes a continuous casting machine which speeds out two to three thousand pound bars at the rate of one every five to seven minutes.

Scovill Photo



Amateur photography was popularized by Scovill Manufacturing Company during the middle 1800's when they were producing cameras, plates, and other photographic equipment. The tradename "Anso" stands for Anthony and Scovill. This illustration was taken from an 1883 publication. During its period of photography supply and equipment manufacture, Scovill published over 70 books on this subject.

Scovill Photo

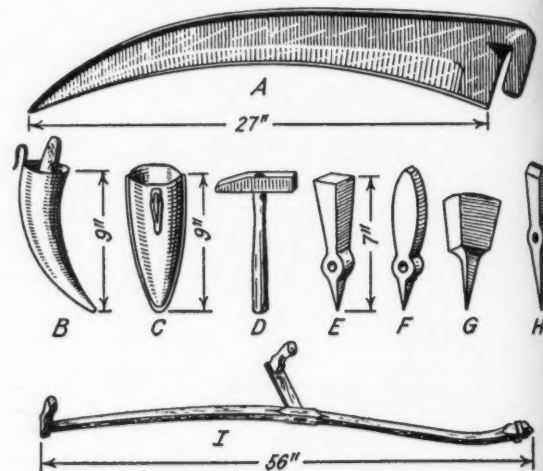
# The Chronicle

## THE PENNSYLVANIA SCYTHE

No collector or student of agricultural tools can have failed to be deeply interested in the mowing outfit of the early Pennsylvania-German farmer. It included a scythe blade (*denzel sense*) hard-forged from extremely malleable iron, unusually broad and thin, with the back edge turned over to form a stiffening "rib" (Fig. A). This was "hung" on a snath, of which one handhold was mortised and pegged at about its middle to the extreme end of the snath, so that the effect was that of a cross-handle, the other handhold being mortised and pegged into the end of a piece some six inches long, projecting from the snath proper, and in turn mortised to it (Fig. 1). Occasionally, the natural growth of the wood was utilized to form one or both of these handholds. The mower also had a small hand-forged "anvil", (*denzel shlock*) usually about seven inches long and weighing about a pound (although they are known up to ten inches and four pounds), of which one end was brought to a sharp point, and the other had a flat face about an inch and a quarter square (Fig. E), or was shaped like a wedge, with a face only about three-sixteenths of an inch wide (Fig. F), and with a hole in the middle, presumably to hang it up by, when not in use. He also had a small hand-forged hammer (*denzel hammer*), with a flat face at one end of the head, and a wedge-shaped peen at the other (Fig. D). When the scythe required a thorough sharpening, he drove the point of the anvil into a log or stump, and drew the blade across its face, beating out the cutting edge with his hammer. For occasional whetting, he carried a piece of fine-grained sandstone in a sheath (*wetz hahn*) which was hooked to his belt. This sheath was occasionally a hollowed-out piece of wood, but much more frequently a cow's horn, with a hand-wrought hook rivetted to it (Fig. B). Many of these bear crude decorations, or the initials of the owner, and occasionally a date, which is usually of the early 19th century. According to Dr. Henry C. Mercer (*Tools of the Nation Maker*, No. 25, 31) the sheath was filled with vinegar to keep the whetstone free from grease.

Dr. Mercer also states that the general use of these remarkable tools was discontinued in Pennsylvania about 1840, but we have recently discovered that, in modern form, the scythes, as well as sickles of similar type, are still imported from Germany and are apparently very popular in widely scattered sections of this country. Mr. S. E. Gage, while driving through New Milford, Conn., recently, noticed a man coming out of the post-office carrying one of these curiously made snaths, bright with new varnish, and ascertained from him that he had purchased it from Marugg Company, of Tracy City, Tenn. We learn from the illustrated catalogue of this concern that the blade which they sell is almost identical with the early type, although made from "German Malleable steel." The snath is of "Tennessee hickory," and differs from the old style in no essential particular, except that the handholds are secured with wire brads, instead of pegs. They also offer a steel hammer head, of which both ends are wedge-shaped, as well as one which has one flat face, but the purchaser is expected to provide his own handle—"the end of a broomstick will answer." The steel anvils are of slightly different shape from any early ones that we have seen (Fig. G and H), but the principle is obviously the same. It is recommended that the

wedge-shaped anvil be used with the flat face of the hammer, in which case "the blade is turned bottom side up and hammered from the bottom," and that the flat anvil be used with the peen of the hammer, in which case "the blade is laid flat side down on the anvil and the edge is hammered



PENNSYLVANIA SCYTHE AND ACCESSORIES

from the upper side." It is claimed that this beating of the blade "produces a wide, keen, somewhat hollow, jagged, cutting edge, at the same time hardening it \*\*\* To prevent heating of the metal, it is well to dip the hammer in water occasionally." The whetstones are imported, and the sheaths are of galvanized iron (Fig. C). It is said that the stone "should be kept immersed in water, while in use, to keep the pores open and sharp." There is no mention of vinegar.

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W. B. SPRAGUE, Editor

## NEW MEMBERS

### MASSACHUSETTS

Boston 15: Mr. Philip A. Kaye, 120 Riverway (1857)

Hancock: Mr. Richard C. Hanson, Box 75 (1856)

West Granville: Mr. Carleton L. Safford (1869)

### MICHIGAN

Birmingham: Mr. and Mrs. James Keene, 31610 Evergreen (1862-1863)

### NEW HAMPSHIRE

Chester: Mrs. G. B. Stubbs, B & J's Carriage Shop, RFD No. 1 (1865)

### NEW JERSEY

Red Bank: Mr. C. Alan Hudson, Jr., The Hudson Shop, 137 Broad St. (1858)

Upper Montclair: Mr. Gordon Bass, 301 Upper Mountain Avenue (1854)

### NEW YORK

Forest Hill 75: Mr. Ernest Newman, 72-61 113th St., Apt. 7-W (1867)

Merrick: Mr. Stephen B. Stilwell, 16 W. Grand Ave. (1864)

Long Island  
Newburgh: Mr. Joseph W. Rake, Box 591 (1865)

Red Hook: Mr. H. S. Ward (1859)

Rhinebeck: Mr. Richard Hanigan (1860)

Rhinebeck: Mr. Horace Thomas Kinner (1861)

New York City 3: Mr. John W. Barnes, 5th Ave., at 18th Street (1866)

Yonkers 3: Mr. Lester Levy, 4 Birch Road (1868)



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